

CWD UPDATE

May 29, 2003

A case of BSE has been confirmed from an eight-year-old cow on a Northern Alberta farm. The positive finding was announced on May 20 after tests were conducted in Canada and England on tissue samples from the animal. The United States and several other countries immediately banned the import of ruminants and ruminant products (this includes cervids and cervid products) from Canada until more information is obtained. The farm where the cow resided is under quarantine and all herd mates will be slaughtered and tested. Tracing the history of the animal has resulted in at least 14 farms being placed under quarantine with several of them depopulated. The trace back investigation has taken officials to a couple of farms near Lloydminster, Saskatchewan. This ties closely to Saskatchewan's CWD area and there is likely to be a lot of media speculation and hype on this connection. This is the second case of BSE in Canada, the first being found in 1997 in an animal that had been imported from England.

Utah has reported their second case of CWD in a wild deer. The latest case was an adult female mule deer from the west side of the La Sal Mountains, about 10 miles from Moab. The animal was collected because it had died after exhibiting the clinical signs of CWD. The first case was from the 2002 hunting season and was located north of the current finding.

After numerous meetings with state agency representative, the EPA Region 8 office in Denver has reassessed their proposed rules on disposal of wastewater to Publicly Owned Treatment Works that would have shut down most testing labs in their region. The regional office of EPA has stated that they will not discuss the proposed guidelines with the POTW operators and will work with states and universities to insure that their guidelines are based on sound science. Representatives of EPA will also tour some of the labs conducting CWD testing to see how they are operated.

Ten Colorado elk ranchers have filed a 10 million dollar lawsuit against the Colorado Department of Agriculture over the compensation they received when their elk herds were depopulated due to CWD. These are the same individuals who have already been compensated millions of dollars for the destruction of their elk, however, they claim that the compensation received was not fair market value for their animals and feel that they are entitled to additional compensation.

Illinois has reported an additional 7 cases of CWD in wild whitetail deer. These animals are from the same area as previous cases in the state. Five of these new positives were from animals sampled during agency culling operations in the area and two were collected because they exhibited clinical signs of the disease. This brings the total CWD positives in Illinois to 14.

The Missouri Department of Conservation reports that the results of 5,972 samples collected from free-ranging deer during the 2002-hunting season failed to find any CWD positive animals in that state. The DOC plans to continue to conduct monitoring for CWD in future years.

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks reports that tissue samples from 997 deer and elk harvested by hunters in 2002 failed to find CWD in that state. Surveillance will continue in Montana, concentrating on areas adjacent to states that have found CWD.

The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources reports the results from testing 2,465 hunter-harvested deer and elk for CWD confirm there are no signs of this fatal disease in Kentucky's herds. KDFWR will continue to collect samples from hunter in future hunting seasons and the ban on imports of deer into that state remains in place.